SINI 4 Spotlight

Volume 1 Number 1   **November2010**

WELCOME to <u>*SINI 4 Spotlight*</u>, a 'periodic' newsletter to *inform* and *connect* NH schools participating in the *Steps to Success* planning year process! The aim of this newsletter is to share good ideas from the field -- from NH as well as other states -- on the best ways to manage the assessment and planning process, highlights of new resources for planning year schools, as well as technical tips and tricks for using the tools in the online system.

If you find this newsletter helpful, please distribute it to others. If you see areas for improvement, please contact Karen (karen.laba@ed.state.nh.us) with your suggestions. Articles to share are ALWAYS welcome!

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What is SINI 4 "restructuring"?

The term "restructuring" as used in discussions of school accountability refers to <u>*dramatic*</u> changes that have a <u>*high*</u> <u>*likelihood*</u> of leading to improved student academic achievement. The description of restructuring in the Phase I document submitted by NH SINI 4 schools is direct and concise:

> Restructuring means a major reorganization of a school's governance structure by the LEA that:
> - makes fundamental reforms, such as significant changes in the school's staffing and governance, to improve student achievement in the school;
> - has substantial promise to improve student academic achievement and enable the school to make AYP as defined by the State's accountability system; and
> - is consistent with State law.

New Hampshire
Department of
Education

Steps to Success

Unfortunately, the term 'restructuring' has been linked to more drastic measures required by some of the current federal programs including removing the principal and 50% of the instructional staff.

Schools in SINI 4 (planning) or SINI 5+ (implementation) phases of the accountability trajectory are advised to watch for unnecessary confusion about the requirements of 'restructuring' when presenting their work to the community. While the ultimate outcome of the restructuring process will be significant changes in the way schools are organized to deliver instruction, it may or may not include drastic changes in personnel.

Referring to the process by its NH name, "Steps to Success" is one way to change your language to deflect unnecessary anxiety across the school community.

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Learning from Others: The Indistar Blog

The developers of the online *Steps to Success* process and tools, the Academic Development Institute, hosts of the Center on Innovation and Improvement (www.centerii.org), have started a blog for coaches, sponsors (state agencies, districts, etc.), and schools to provide an opportunity to share their school improvement experiences. Indistar is the original name of the online process, and many states and agencies have customized the tool to suit their unique needs.

Ten states and the Bureau of Indian Education are using Indistar with their schools to guide both rapid and continuous improvement processes. You can share your experience with *Steps to Success* (Indistar) and learn from coaches and schools across the country by visiting the blog or subscribing to receive posts via email.

Here's a recent posting from the blog. You're invited to log on frequently to read the other postings. I hope you find many of them useful. (http://indistar.blogspot.com)

Linking Indicators to Outcomes

Over the past decade, educators have committed much time and energy to becoming proficient data analysts. They have learned to use tools to "query the data" to better understand what students know and are able to do. Teachers and administrators have developed an appreciation for data – both qualitative and quantitative – and have come to value how it can inform their decision making.

One school just recently introduced to Indistar worried that their investment in building their capacity to make good use of student achievement data would be diminished if they adopted Indistar and focused attention on the research-based indicators. How would their "data team" structure integrate with the "instructional teams" mentioned in the indicators? Would they still

make use of the skills they developed to critically examine student outcomes across multiple measures?

We had a conversation about "inputs" and "outcomes" and looked at how the Indistar indicators can help schools make the connection between the "inputs" – curriculum, instruction, policies and practices – and the "outcomes" – student achievement. They recognized they often reach a point in their data analysis conversations where they know their students' strengths and gaps with a high degree of confidence, but bog down at the question, "Now what?" We talked about how Indistar indicators can help them answer the "now what?" question by focusing on those educational practices that have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness.

We looked at one particular indicator to judge how Indistar might 'fit' into their data culture:

Instructional Teams use student learning data to plan instruction.

The school's assessment of its current level of implementation of this practice will generate important discussion about how teachers have made use of their rich collection of student data. They can rate this indicator a top priority to reinforce their school's data focus. Given their intensive investment in training teachers to become proficient in data analysis, they can select "relatively easy to address" for the opportunity rating.

Have your schools worried that they will have to set aside their existing data-based decision making initiatives in order to engage with Indistar? Have you been able to show how Indistar "supplements, not supplants" existing improvement efforts? Share your stories with us. Thanks, Karen

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Managing the Work: Choosing "all for one" or "divide and conquer" approaches

During my visits with each of the new SINI 4 planning year schools, one of the first questions I hear is, "You want us to assess ALL EIGHTY TWO INDICATORS?!? Every single one?!?"

While the short answer is, "Yes," I quickly move to explaining how others have chosen to manage the work to derive greatest benefit from the conversation around the 82 indicators of effective practice.

At one end of the continuum is an "all for one; one for all" method, in which the whole school or a selected team conduct the assessment of every one of the indicators themselves, then share their conclusions with the rest of the school community. In extremely small schools, or those undergoing significant changes or launching multiple initiatives at once, this may be the only approach possible. When there are few hands, "all hands" are required for such an important task.

The other end of the continuum can be thought of as the "divide and conquer" approach. Many variations of this method are possible, but the goal is to take advantage of existing structures (grade level teams, intervention teams, leadership teams, etc.) to distribute responsibility for conducting the self-assessment across the entire staff. The team leader(s) can

identify which indicators are best addressed by which subgroups – instructional practice indicators by faculty and paraprofessionals; leadership and decision making indicators by the leadership team – and invite the subgroups to complete the Step 4 worksheet for their assigned indicators.

One school asked if there were 'priority' indicators they should address first. I explained that the NH DOE has chosen to allow schools to select their own priority for which indicators to assess when. However, other states and agencies have identified what they call "key" indicators. If you follow the login instructions on the *Jump Start* document for the sample NH school site (www.centerii.org; Indistar login; login = Nhschool; password = nhschool) and look through the *Resources* tab (upper right) you'll see the list of indicators for Alaska (AK) and BIE (Bureau of Indian Education). Those agencies have identified "key" indicators for their schools. Others include North Dakota (ND) and Idaho (ID).

If you want more guidance on ways to manage the work of assessing your practices against the 82 indicators of effective practice, please don't hesitate to contact Karen (603 743-5129; 603 969-0988; karen.laba@ed.state.nh.us).

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Who ARE the SINI 4 schools?

Several of you have asked about the other schools in your cohort of SINI 4 schools. Here's a list of schools by district, with contact information for the principal.

We hope to convene you by webinar soon, so you'll be able to talk with your colleagues directly, but in the meantime you may want reach out on your own to those launching their planning year along with you.

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I hope you find this newsletter helpful. Please contact me if you have suggestions for items to include in a future issue or recommendations for improvement. Distribute to those who might find this information useful.   Thanks!

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SINI 4 -- 2010-2011 Planning Year Schools

SAU/ District	School	Principal/Contact Email, Phone
#6 Claremont	Disnard Elementary	Melissa Lewis mlewis@claremont.k12.nh.us 603 543- 4260
# 7 Colebrook	Colebrook Elementary	Mary M. Jolles mjolles@colebrook.k12.nh.us 603-237-4801
# 53 Deerfield	Deerfield Elementary	Paul Yergeau pyergeau@sau53.org 603-463-7422
#49 Governor Wentworth	Kingswood Middle School	Kirkland (Rusty) O. Ross rross@govwentworth.k12.nh.us 603-569-3689
#27 Litchfield	Litchfield Middle school	Thomas Lecklider tlecklider@litchfieldsd.org 603-424-2133
#37 Manchester	Bakersville	Judith Adams juadams@mansd.org 603-624-6312
#37 Manchester	Hallsville	James E. Davenport jdavenport@mansd.org 603-624-6332
#37 Manchester	McDonough	Kenneth V. Dibenedetto kdibenedetto@mansd.org 603-624-6373
#43 Newport	Towle Elementary	Kathryn M. Niboli & Margaret McKenney mcnib@newport.k12.nh.us 603-863-2050
#33 Raymond	Lamprey River	Daniel LeGallo d.legallo@sau33.com 603-895-3117
#33 Raymond	Raymond High School	Kirk Beitler k.beitler@sau33.com 603-895-6616
#54 Rochester	Chamberlain	Stephen M. Leclair leclair.s@rochesterschools.com 603-332-5258
#56 Somersworth	Hilltop	Katherine Segal ksegal@sau56.org 603-692-2435
#56 Somersworth	Maple Wood Elementary	Caroline F. Butler cbutler@sau56.k12.nh.us 603-692-3331
#56 Somersworth	Somersworth Middle	Michael Quigley mquigley@sau56.org
#16 Exeter*	Exeter Cooperative Middle	Tom O'Malley tomalley@sau16.org Marcy Dovholuk mdovholuk@sau16.org 603 775-8700